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A WISE FOOL

The Cast

Carmen Deleres.....Alice Hollister
Jean Jacques Barbille...James Kirkwood
Zee Barbille.....Ann Ferrest
George Massen.....Alan Hale
Sebastian Deleres.....Fred Huntly
Gerard Fynes.....William Boyd
Virginie Poussette.....Truly Shattuck
Fille.....Harry Buffle
Judge Carcasson.....Charles Ogle
The Curate.....John Herdman
Mme. Langleis.....Mabel Van Buren

JUN 28 1921

This is the story of Jean Jacques Barbille, a wealthy, successful, important man in the Parish of St. Saviour's, Quebec. He has farms, a mill, is an insurance agent, a money-lender, and is the most conspicuous figure in his district. He is a self-made philosopher.

It is his cheap philosophy which brings him to disaster, but his true philosophy which saves him in the end. Jean Jacques Barbille is an egotist. In short, when he halts, he wishes the world to halt. He wants the world to say, "Here comes Jean Jacques Barbille."

He is generous, big-hearted and everyone loves him in spite of his rather ostentatious philosophy and mannerisms.

His own little world in the Parish of St. Saviour's, Quebec, gives him the homage due to his importance and wealth, but he wants to see the world outside. In his own words, before he settles down permanently, he wants to "know it all- to gallop - to creep - to walk - to crawl". And so he goes to Paris on the grand tour. But he finds that Paris does not even want to know him. Even a Paris gendarme does not know where Quebec is, much less who "Jean Jacques Barbille" is.

His sojourn in France is a failure. Returning from his shattered dream of Paris, he meets on the steamer "Antoine" the bad Sebastian Deleres, an exile from Spain, and his beautiful daughter Carmen, who plays the guitar and is not bad but is vain, voluptuous and attractive.

Deleres sees in Jean Jacques a pigeon to pluck. Carmen sees in him a possible husband, for her father and herself have very little cash.

Jean Jacques and the two Spaniards become acquainted and Jean Jacques makes love to the girl with due caution. He hesitates to declare his love for her, but as they are nearing the coast of Gaspé, is about to propose to her when the ship strikes a sunken iceberg. He says "The rest of the story tomorrow."

Jean Jacques is the hero of the hour as he helps to man the pumps, singing his French-Canadian songs to keep up the spirits of the passengers and crew. He gives his place in a boat to a little boy, but when the "Antoine" sinks, he cannot make much headway for he is not a good swimmer. Carmen, who is clinging to a piece of wreckage, comes to his assistance and they get safely to shore.

Jean Jacques, "You have saved my life." He marries her and takes her to the Manor Cartier, but his fellow countrymen do not like the "Spanische", and through the succeeding years, while their daughter, Zee, is growing up, the feeling that she is not "One of them" is in all minds; until, finally, desperate with dullness, longing for her own country, weary of staying in one little parish, always just "the wife of Jean Jacques Barbille", and with Jean Jacques' unintentional neglect, she welcomes the advent of handsome George Massen, a master

carpenter, who is mending the flume of the mill.

There is mutual admiration at their first meeting, and soon it goes further, until at last they plan to leave St. Saviour's together. However, Jean Jacques has been an unknown spectator to their secret meeting as he sits beside the river and sees his wife Miss Masson and hears her say, "Tomorrow for sure".

The next morning, while Masson is inspecting the flume at the mill, Jean Jacques withdraws the ladder and prepares to pull the lever that will flood the flume and overwhelm Masson. Masson however, who is an able man and knows that Jean Jacques has a weakness for philosophy, determines to gain time and says, "Wait a minute." Then by adroit references and suggestions, he works upon Jean Jacques' mind, keeping the lever from being pulled. He asks first for time to play. This is granted, then he shows that Jean Jacques has neglected his wife and that Carmen would not have looked at himself if Jean Jacques had given her more attention. Finally he asserts that nothing wrong has been done and that if Jean Jacques kills him, Zee, his daughter, will have a legacy of a father who has died "the death of a murderer". Jean Jacques listens to his masterly logic and after a moment of hesitation, lets him go.

Carmen, on hearing of what so nearly happened, leaves her husband and goes to Masson, intending to go away with him. But Masson will not take her, saying he is paying Jean Jacques back for his life by letting Zee keep her mother. Carmen says, "I wish Jean Jacques had opened the gates", and strikes him in the face and leaves. But she does not go home - she seeks a life of her own in Montreal and has a hard struggle to live, finally accepting a position as chorus girl.

The manager, Hugh Stelfe, taken with her fine figure and charming personality, makes violent love to her, and once more in distress, she flees, taking refuge in a convent, where she finds solace and a secret hiding-place.

Later Jean Jacques receives another blow to his pride, Zee falls in love with Gerard Fynes, "a man from outside" - a lawyer turned actor, a Protestant and an English-Canadian, and when her father bitterly refuses consent to her marriage with Gerard, she leaves Jean Jacques for her lover. Together they start life in the far west on a farm of 340 acres which Jean Jacques has given her on his birthday.

But troubles never come singly, and Jean Jacques has spent much money searching for his wife. His father-in-law, an eternal beggar, is a constant drain on his resources. Sebastian Dolores, while smoking in the mill, sets it on fire - and it is gone before help can save it.

Jean Jacques, who is not in a bad way financially, mortgages his chief farm to rebuild the mill, but before he can do so, Sebastian Dolores steals the money and returns to Spain, to "spend his declining days", having "made his fortune."

And so Jean Jacques is ruined completely and is forced to sell everything at an auction, and taking with him only Carmen's bird-cage, he sets off alone seeking his daughter. He arrives in Montreal where, at Madame Glexel's tavern, he meets with Hugh Stelfe, the theatrical manager, and sees on his finger Carmen's ring. This maddens him. He fights Stelfe, beats him and learns that Carmen's whereabouts are not known to the man.

Hearing that a woman in the Convent is very ill, he tells Madame Glexel, the landlady, to take his bird to cheer her up, saying "It will help her. Such a bird it is." he carries the cage and together they go to the Convent. When the bird is put in the window of the sick room and the bird sings, the woman in the chair opens her eyes and stares. And when they bring her the cage to see, she recognizes it as her own - for she is Carmen. She is overcome. She learns for the first time that Jean Jacques is penniless and an exile from home, and she is deeply moved. Jean Jacques is brought up and a heart-touching reconciliation occurs.

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His daughter and son-in-law in the West have read in the papers of Jean Jacques Barbille's ruin and they start East to find him. They go back to Vilray and there the little clerk of the Court, Monsier Fille, tells them that Jean Jacques has gone away but that if they go to Montreal, perhaps they will find him.

In Montreal, at Madame Glezel's tavern, Jean Jacques, his wife, Carmen and his child are happily re-united.

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